

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 17595

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, FR

SUBJECT: NEW APPROACH AT QUAI

1. SINCE SAUVAGNARGUES HAS TAKEN CHARGE OF QUAI WE HAVE HEARD RUMORS OF AN IMPENDING PERSONNEL SHAKE-UP INVOLVING BOTH HIGH LEVEL QUAI OFFICIALS AND FRENCH AMBASSADORS ABROAD. OUR IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, IS THAT IF GISCARD AND SAUVAGNARGUES SHOULD DECIDE TO MOVE THEY WILL MOVE SLOWLY IN CHANGING PERSONNEL AND WE DO NOT EXPECT SUDDEN, WHOLESAL RESHUFFLING OF POSTS.

2. WITH RESPECT TO RELATIONS WITHIN THE QUAI, I WAS INTERESTED IN A COMMENT MADE BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BERNARD DESTREMAU, DURING LUNCHEON WITH ME ON JULY 17. HE SAID THAT HE AND SAUVAGNARGUES HAD ASKED ALL SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE QUAI TO TAKE A NEW LOOK AT THE PROBLEMS THEY HAVE BEEN DEALING WITH. THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THE CONCLUSIONS FOLLOWING SUCH A NEW LOOK MIGHT CONFORM WITH CURRENT FRENCH POLICIES ON MANY ISSUES, BUT
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THAT BECAUSE PROBLEMS CHANGE IT IS NECESSARY TO

MAINTAIN A FLEXIBLE APPROACH. DESTREMAU ADDED THAT MOST OF THE TOP QUAI OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN IN THEIR JOBS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, THINK IN TERMS OF PAST POLICY DECISIONS AND THAT REVIEW OF THOSE POLICIES IS NECESSARY, PARTICULARLY TO MAKE THE BUREAUCRACY THINK CREATIVELY, AS BOTH HE AND SAUVAGNARGUES WISH IT TO DO. I SAID THAT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND OTHER AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON WE TOO WERE TRYING TO APPROACH ISSUES FLEXIBLY AND PRAGMATICALLY.

4. COMMENT: DESTREMAU'S REMARKS IMPLY THAT SAUVAGNARGUES INTENDS TO KEEP THE SAME TEAM AT THE QUAI, AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE; THEY ALSO INDICATE A DETERMINATION TO PREVENT RIGIDITY IN FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY STEMMING FROM BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA.
IRWIN

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